

VZCZCXR06998
PP RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHNM #0572/01 1511011

ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 301011Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4338
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0686
RHMFIA/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUZEHAA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NIAMEY 000572

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV MOPS PINR NG
SUBJECT: NIGER: RESIGNATIONS FROM THE MNJ POLITICAL CELL;
NEW GROUP FORMED

REF: 07 NIAMEY 904

¶1. (U) A May 28 posting on the MNJ web site signed by Chehna ag Hamate announced Hamate's resignation from the MNJ political cell. On May 30 another posting said that the political cell had met the day before and accepted the resignation of Chehna Hamate and Kaocen Seydou Maiga. The new political cell is comprised of:

Ghissa (Rhissa?) Feltou, coordinator;
Issouf ag Maha, communications director;
Ghoulmou Moctar secretary for foreign relations;
Atouwa Egour executive secretary;
Mohamed Wan Jade (aka Tombola), military counselor; and,
Ahmed Akoli, political secretary.

¶2. (U) When the MNJ was established in July 2007, Aghali Alambo was listed as President of the Political Bureau, and Mohamed Acheriff as the Vice President. Last July 15 (reftel), the MNJ announced the composition of the political bureau as:

Chehna ag Hamate, president;
Rhissa ag Feltou, vice president;
Seydou Kaocen Maiga, secretary-general and spokesman;
Moussa Niandou, Assistant secretary-general;
Ghoulmou Moctar, secretary for foreign relations; and,
Ahmed Akoli, political secretary.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: The political cell/bureau does not appear to have any role in MNJ military actions. It is presumably focused on fund raising and otherwise developing support with both Nigeriens in the diaspora and foreign groups. (Issouf ag Maha has given talks in support of the MNJ in the United States.) Thus, the shake-up is unlikely to have any near-term effect on military activities, which are sporadic anyway, but it may reduce financial and other support to the organization.

¶4. (U) On May 30, a new website appeared (redressement.unblog.fr) announcing the formation of the "Front des Forces de Redressement" (FFR). The group is comprised of:

Aoutchiki Kriska, president;
Rhissa ag Boula, war commissar;
Seydou-Kaocen ag Amadou Maiga, communications and information commissar;
Chehna ag Hamate, commissar for relations with Europe;
Ibrahim ag Amounmoune Hamid, commissar for mines, energy and the environment;
Ahmad ag Ibrahim Rhissa, commissar for development and humanitarian action;
Elkontchi ag Aoutchiki Kriska, commissar for relations with

the Maghreb;
Hamadou Zola Kambessikone, commissar for relations with the Americas;
Ahmed ag Ghamir Dayak, commissar for youth, sport and culture;
Abdoulaye ag Sabiou, commissar for justice and human rights;
Mohamed ag Inwilli, commissar for relations with international organizations; and,
A headquarters with five general officers.

¶ 5. (U) Kriska was a senior member of the Front de Liberation de Tamoust (FLT) during the rebellion of the early 1990s. (The head of the FLT, Mohamed Akotey, is currently the GON environment minister.)

¶ 6. (U) Rhissa Ag Boula was the head of the leading group in the 1990s rebellion, the Front de Liberation de L'Air et de l'Azawak (FLAA). He served as GON tourism minister after the rebellion, but was later jailed for his alleged involvement in the murder of a politician in 2004. He has been out of Niger (reportedly in Libya, France and/or Algeria) since the current rebellion began in February 2007. He has criticized the government and expressed support for the MNJ, but the MNJ has disavowed any connections with him.

¶ 7. (U) MNJ defectors Hamate and Maiga have joined the new group. FFR Commissar for relations with the Americas Kambessikone had previously served as the MNJ contact in New York.

¶ 8. (SBU) Comment: A fracturing of the rebel movement is consistent with splits within the Tuareg community. During

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the rebellion of the early 1990s, there were 13 Tuareg groups, as well as two Toubou ones.

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